

## ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

Public Works Building Room A109

September 9, 2009 4:30-6:30

#### **Attending:**

**Commission Members:** Josh O'Conner, Dave Erb, Hanna Raskin, Andrew Goldberg, Tom Tomlin

**Staff:** Mariate Echeverry, Ken Putnam, Edna Johnson, Janet GeorgeMurr, Eugenia Singleton, Kathy Molin

**HDR Consultant:** Robert Bush

**Community members:** Tom Herman, Paul Van Heden, Heather Strassberg of MPO, Dave Hastings, Natalie Mindek, MPO

4:35pm: Hanna opened the meeting.

**Agenda Amendments:** None

#### **Explanation of Public Comment Standards and Opportunities:**

- Hanna – welcomed the public and read the standards of procedures regarding public comment.

**August 12, 2009 Minutes Review:** Josh made motion to approve, Andrew second; all in favor

#### **Welcome Public – Introductions and Pre-Meeting Public Comment**

- Hanna welcomed the public with an introduction of each member of Transit Commission, staff and public. Public comments were not given at this time.

#### **Welcoming of Tom Tomlin – New Transit Commission Member:**

- Tom briefed the commission, staff and public on his experience with transit. Mr. Tomlin was appointed in 1984 and served on the what was then the Transit Authority Board and served until 1998 when the Transit Authority was changed to the Transit Commission. He continued to serve out his remaining two years on the TC, which expired on 12/31/2000. He stated that while attending college at UT in Knoxville, he would come home on the weekends and drive a bus part time and also, drive during the summer. Even after graduating and working full time as an insurance adjuster, he continued driving for 11 years.
- Hanna stated that a new TC member packet that she reviewed and placed in a binder was available for this meeting for any other staff to view. Janet will send to Tom by PDF.

#### **Update from Transit Commission Members Work and New Business:**

- **Volunteer Day Program (Transit Ambassador Program) at Transit Center:**

Mariate notified the Assistant City Attorney, Martha McGlohan, requesting recommendations regarding the Transit Ambassador Program, as follows: A proposal or plan should be prepared setting forth the purpose of the Transit Ambassador Program, how ambassadors will be selected, what the ambassadors will be expected to do, how many ambassadors will be expected work at any one time, the number of hours anticipated, the specific location where the work is to be performed, why the proposed work cannot be performed by existing transit personnel, the type of training involved, who will perform the training, whether there will be a waiver of liability. The Management Company will need to approve of such because if we are to place the volunteers in the space occupied by the management company employees, there should be some mutual agreement for such. We will also need to, at some point in time, involve



Risk Management because although we may require a waiver of liability, if the volunteer is injured while on City property and performing the volunteer work, the waiver is worthless. The Transit Commission must understand that this is a substantial undertaking and whenever we place people in public buildings to perform volunteer work, we place not only the volunteers in possible harm way, but the public as well, if a careful and deliberate screening process is not used.

Mariate suggested to involve management and to include a written Waiver of Liability for the volunteers. Josh stated to have a written proposal and list of Martha's concerns; and send to Andrew for review. Edna mentioned that as long as money is not involved it would be a good idea to have the Transit Ambassador Program. Hanna will develop the draft, which will be reviewed by Martha McGlohon; then voted upon by TC; then to implementation of the program.

- **Get There Asheville** – Hanna described the event and showed the poster announcing the event. Hanna hopes that some commission members will show up. It is an informal meeting on multi-modal transportation, and the format will be similar to a fair. Andrew mentioned that this event is important to the constituents and Josh mentioned to obtain comments on transit from the public. This will also encourage the relationship with TC and Get There Asheville.
- **Bus Holding Policy (review of issue raised by Jim Barton):** - Hanna stated that Jim Barton, who is active in the transit community, emailed TC. Asking what role TC would play in the recent adoption of the buses not waiting policy, which causes him and other riders late, and missing the buses. Mariate stated that this has been a new policy adopted eight months ago. This was evaluated as to what is important, either holding the buses or being on time. Edna did mention that the bus is held on the last route 6/6:30pm. There was a TC discussion and Josh made the motion to revisit this issue after the Transit Master Plan is implemented.
- **Transit System and International Community:** – Josh mentioned that Geri Solomon has increased the access to the international community. Geri is focusing on short term ideas and improvements. Josh to hold off until October meeting and he will send a proposal to TC.
- **November TC meeting:** – Hanna stated that the November TC meeting coincides with the Veteran's Day on 11/11. Josh made the motion to move the TC meeting to another date of Wed 11/18 in order to set an example. All TC members were in agreement and Janet will reschedule the November meeting and will send out a meeting request..
- **Transit Commission Presentation Schedule:** Hanna stated various topics to be educated on transit and to solicit for future presenters. Paul suggested contacting in someone in Charlotte to organize in getting a presenter to speak on the new sales tax and the best use of it. Andrew indicated that he makes contacts in Charlotte often and will look into this matter. Josh recommended soliciting someone in the Planning Dept on land use for transit and project/goals of coming months.
- **Holiday Malfunction:** Hanna asked how communication to riders during Labor Day holiday was. Edna stated that she did not receive complaints. Mariate mentioned that the riders know that the buses are not running on this holiday. It was also posted at the Transit Center, website and press release.

#### **UPDATE FROM STAFF:**

- **PassPort Program** – Kathy Molin updated TC on the Passport Program. Kathy stated that the ridership has dropped for a number of reasons, such as layoffs with the current situation of the economy.



**Grove Park Inn:** – Kathy is meeting with GPI to discuss increasing ridership by having posters in a second language; GPI has an interpreter on-site. Hanna asked if the buses are held for the GPI employees. Kathy indicated that the buses are not being held for the GPI employees.

**Buncombe County:** – ridership is steady and contract expires in September and will renew. Kathy mentioned that further promotion of the PassPort Program will be implemented. Hanna asked if this included the City Schools for teachers. Kathy mentioned that Asheville City Schools called about the program.

**City of Asheville:** is steady

**Greenlife:** ridership is down and Kathy has been exchanging emails with the General Manager.

**UNCA:** ridership was down due to school being out for the summer. Kathy is meeting with the TDM staff person and intern on Friday to discuss promotion of transportation programs to students and staff at UNCA.

**Federal Building:** Kathy mentioned that she is working with someone in setting up presentations for the employees on the PassPort Program.

**VA:** pretax program i.e. cafeteria plan that will work with the PassPort Program.

Andrew mentioned with the TMP there are renewed opportunities. Mariate stated in revamping the program to make it broader to analyze options and what other states are doing. For example, Boulder CO has a neighborhood program, which consists of an administrative component to have the different system integrated.

Kathy mentioned that with the new fareboxes a better system will be implemented for the PassPort Program. Hanna asked if Kathy approach the Chamber of Commerce on the small businesses to purchase a monthly or yearly passes. Josh mentioned that this would work if it were collectively of small businesses. Mariate mentioned that this is an area that is being looked into as to what other states are doing.

**Emergency Ride:** Kathy announced that people can now register online for 6 months and that 117 people have signed up.

**Car Sharing:** Kathy is researching the car sharing program for the local universities and possibly downtown Asheville. She will keep the TC updated.

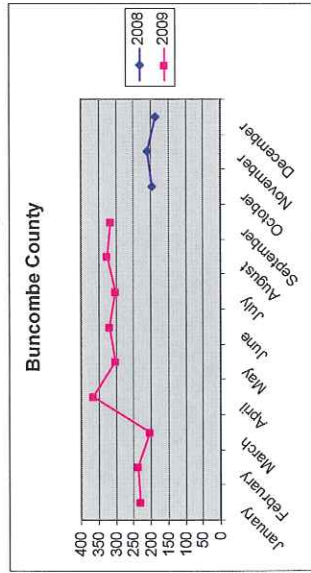
- **Health Precautions for Cold and Flu Season:** – Edna explained what measures taken to deal with the flu season. Drivers have hand sanitizers and at some point considering using masks. Edna is working on a plan to cover operations if there was a lack of staff during the flu season. Hanna asked if flu shots could be available at the Transit Center. Edna stated that flu shots could not be available, but mentioned that posters are being displayed with “cover your mouth and washing of the hands are essential.” Josh asked if a disaster plan is developed if H1N1 became an epidemic. Heather Strassberg from Land of Sky mentioned that she has 8 1/2x 11 notices for Madison County that she will send to Edna.
- **Customer Notification of TC Meetings:** – Edna mentioned that printed notices on 8 1/2 x 11 are less expensive than posters on the buses in announcing the monthly TC meetings.

**Transit Master Plan Update:** – Robert Bush, HDR consultant presented to the TC on the updated proposal and route maps recommendations. The Transit Master Plan is located on the City website at [ashevillenc.gov](http://ashevillenc.gov). The public meeting will be held at the time of Council on 10/27 when the TMP is presented. Also mentioned was the short time to review the TMP. Mariate mentioned that the TMP proposal would be available at the libraries, on website, Transit Center, City Hall, a press release and sending email to the stake holders.

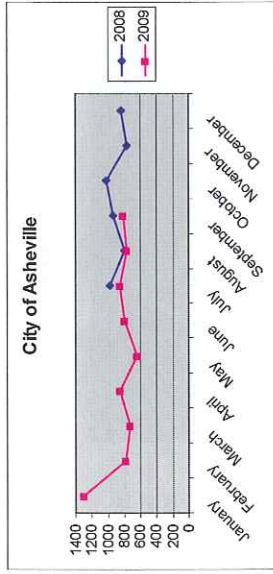
Andrew suggested that due to the length of the TMP discussion, to table the other items on the agenda for the October TC meeting.

Paul Van Heden invited everyone to the Friends of Transit at Thirsty Monk after the TC meeting at 7:30 pm.

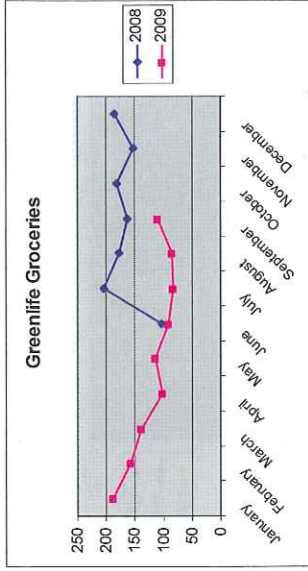
6:40pm Meeting Adjourned.



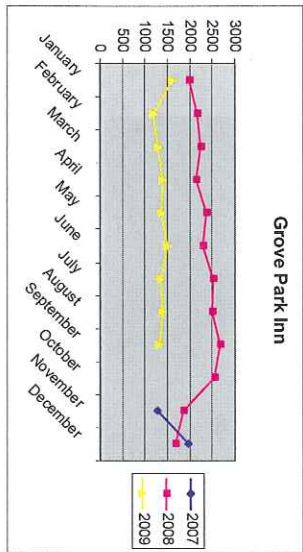
Buncombe County	2008	2009
January		231
February		236
March		204
April		366
May		302
June		319
July		301
August		324
September		315
October	195	
November	209	
December	187	
Year Totals	591	2598
Overall Totals	3189	5787



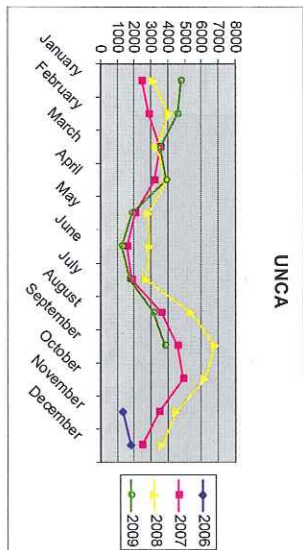
City of Asheville	2008	2009
January		1306
February		779
March		733
April		850
May		643
June		793
July	976	857
August	797	774
September	940	807
October	1018	
November	770	
December	835	
Year Totals	5336	7542
Overall Totals	12878	20420



Greenlife	2008	2009
January		188
February		156
March		138
April		101
May		113
June	103	90
July	205	82
August	177	84
September	164	110
October	181	
November	152	
December	185	
Year Totals	1167	1062
Overall Totals	2229	3291



Grove Park Inn	2007	2008	2009
January	1993	1592	
February	2156	1198	
March	2225	1305	
April	2128	1386	
May	2356	1366	
June	2298	1509	
July	2520	1345	
August	2494	1387	
September	2659	1320	
October	2552		
November	1268	1863	
December	1969	1676	
Year Totals	3237	26920	12408



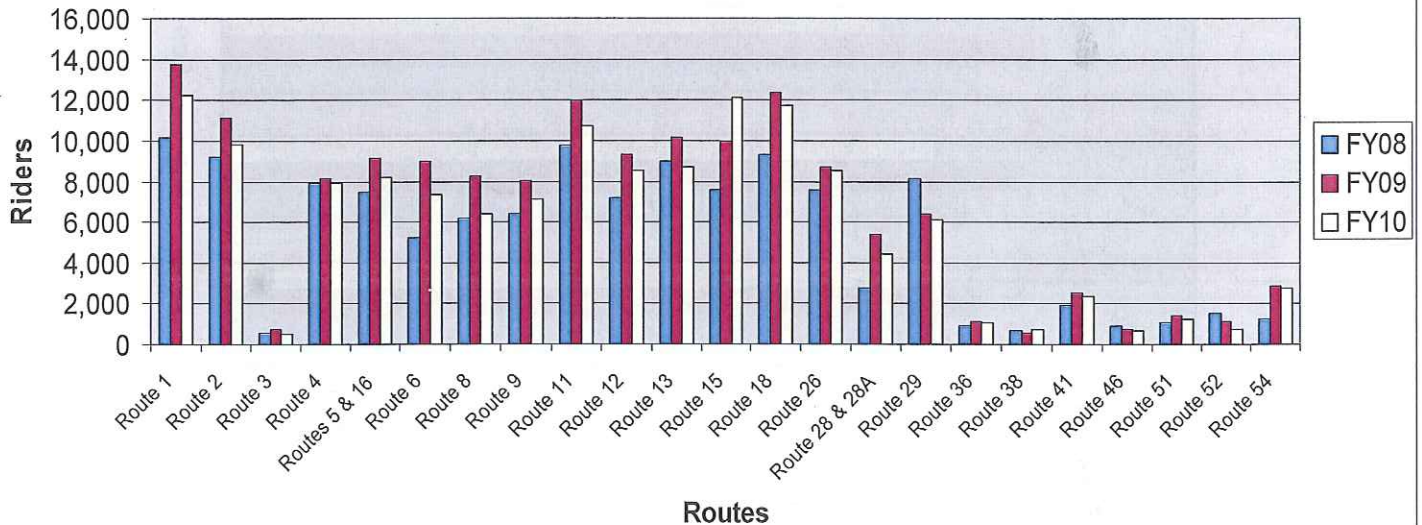
UNCA	2006	2007	2008	2009
January	2433	3140	4777	
February	2860	4041	4562	
March	3536	3346	3554	
April	3163	3906	3891	
May	2010	2870	1803	
June	1529	2882	1253	
July	1816	2692	1677	
August	3611	5336	3118	
September	4512	6755	3771	
October	4881	6169		
November	1285	3452	4444	
December	1754	2443	3649	
Year Totals	3039	36246	49230	28406
Overall Totals	116921			



Asheville Transit System  
Route Ridership-September FY10

Current Month					Fiscal Year to Date			
Route	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta	This Year	Last Year	Change	Delta
1	12,225	13,771	(1,546)	-11%	37,723	39,867	(2,144)	-5%
2	9,846	11,121	(1,275)	-11%	28,484	31,874	(3,390)	-11%
3	487	735	(248)	-34%	872	1,467	(595)	-41%
4	7,915	8,135	(220)	-3%	23,358	24,542	(1,184)	-5%
5 & 16	8,195	9,130	(935)	-10%	25,793	27,185	(1,392)	-5%
6	7,378	8,998	(1,620)	-18%	21,980	24,628	(2,648)	-11%
8	6,418	8,245	(1,827)	-22%	19,918	24,294	(4,376)	-18%
9	7,146	8,036	(890)	-11%	21,598	23,669	(2,071)	-9%
11	10,729	11,983	(1,254)	-10%	31,906	34,054	(2,148)	-6%
12	8,527	9,314	(787)	-8%	25,862	26,300	(438)	-2%
13	8,709	10,152	(1,443)	-14%	27,630	30,176	(2,546)	-8%
15	12,115	9,963	2,152	22%	29,957	29,986	(29)	0%
18	11,737	12,333	(596)	-5%	31,711	32,465	(754)	-2%
26	8,516	8,703	(187)	-2%	26,533	27,015	(482)	-2%
28/28A	4,413	5,368	(955)	-18%	14,336	14,979	(643)	-4%
29	6,125	6,408	(283)	-4%	15,293	15,280	13	0%
36	1,045	1,123	(78)	-7%	3,005	3,591	(586)	-16%
38	715	587	128	22%	2,285	1,720	565	33%
41	2,331	2,523	(192)	-8%	7,191	7,354	(163)	-2%
46	648	730	(82)	-11%	1,984	2,598	(614)	-24%
51	1,263	1,403	(140)	-10%	4,004	4,119	(115)	-3%
52	711	1,122	(411)	-37%	2,085	2,962	(877)	-30%
54	2,746	2,847	(101)	-4%	8,126	7,144	982	14%

**Route comparison September FY2010**



# Ridership Comparison

